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## Times Correspondent Given Commendation From Shultz

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 13 — Secretary of State George P. Shultz believes that Leslie H. Gelb, national security correspondent of The New York Times, is "an able journalist and a patriotic person," a State Department spokesman said today.

The spokesman, Edward P. Djerejian, made the comment when asked for Mr. Shultz's personal view of remarks by Lieut. Gen. John T. Chain Jr., the director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs.

Last week General Chain rescinded an order to his staff not to speak to Mr. Gelb, a former director of the bureau. He also ordered that a sign put up in place of Mr. Gelb's picture, which had hung alongside those of other directors, be taken down.

The sign said Mr. Gelb had "willingly, and knowingly" published "classified information, the release of which is harmful and damaging to the country." It was referring to an article in The Times on Feb. 13 about American contingency plans for deploying nuclear weapons in countries that do not possess them. Information about those

plans had been published and discussed in those countries previously.

When he rescinded his order, General Chain said nevertheless that he had not altered "my strong and continuing conviction that his act of publishing classified information damaged our nation's security." General Chain also did not return Mr. Gelb's picture to the wall.

This led Representative Dante B. Fascell, Democrat of Florida and chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and three other Congressmen to write Mr. Shultz asking his position on the matter.

Today, Mr. Djerejian said that Mr. Shultz would reply to the letter when he returned from Moscow but "in the meantime, let me reiterate the point that General Chain has the Secretary's full and complete confidence and add that the Secretary believes that Les Gelb is an able journalist and a patriotic person."

A spokesman for General Chain said he had no comment to make. She said that the picture had not been returned to its place.